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## PHILADELPHIA'S FORGOTTEN MAYOR: S. DAVIS WILSON

PHILADELPHIA has not been blessed with exciting mayors. Aside from Richardson Dilworth or Frank Rizzo, our mayors have tended to fall into a simple mold—safe, dull, colorless, and boring, all clones of Jim Tate. There are no funny anecdotes connected with its mayors, no humanizing nicknames like ‘The Little Flower,’ or ‘Honey Fitz’ or Frank ‘I am the Law’ Hague. In other words, its mayors have reflected Philadelphia’s view of itself as a hardworking, sober, business-oriented city.

And yet lurking in Philadelphia’s not-so-distant past is a mayor who for sheer outrageousness was the match for anyone produced by any city in America. I speak of the long forgotten S. Davis Wilson, mayor of Philadelphia from 1935–39. No one ever called him boring or dull. Philadelphia politics during the decade he was on top was filled with excitement, dramatic crises and outrageous quotes. If nothing else, he was good copy. Samuel Davis Wilson, S. Davis Wilson, ‘Ashcan’ Wilson, ‘Devious’ Wilson, ‘Philadelphia’s Huey Long’ were some of the tags hung on this bigger than life character.

Wilson was born in Boston in 1881. We don’t know much about his youth. He claimed descent from the early Pilgrims, John Alden and Priscilla Mullins. It was precisely the kind of claim that he would make over and over in his political career, one that was difficult, if not impossible, to check out. His father died when Wilson was 5. His mother, the first female graduate of Bates College, worked hard to put young Sam through Phillips Exeter Academy. But he was an indifferent student. While still in his teens, he was appointed Secretary to the Boston Public School Association and scored his first political coup. The

Association's candidates for School Board had been defeated in a crucial election. Wilson suspected treachery and helped organize a recount, which ended in the election of the Association's candidates. This job soon bored him and he began the drift that characterized his career until he found his home in Philadelphia politics. From Boston he went to Vermont, where he worked as an agent of the State's Attorney and killed a man in a gunfight. He claimed he shot the man in the line of duty, but stories circulated for years that the incident was some kind of grudge. Again not much about the shooting is known other than Wilson's version. When the incident emerged later in his career, he told how while on duty one night he was ambushed by a gang of thugs. He shot it out with them, killing their leader. A subsequent grand jury cleared Wilson of any charge of wrong doing. Years later, when he was called a killer during his campaign for mayor, he would shout at the hecklers, "Was the man who killed Dillinger a murderer?"

From Vermont he went into the Army for two years. He then became assistant to Edward Everett Hale, chaplain of the United States Senate, and author of *The Man Without A Country*.<sup>1</sup>

In 1905 Wilson, like his fellow Bostonian before him, Benjamin Franklin, left for the greener pastures of Philadelphia. He was hired as assistant director of the Law and Order Society, a committee of stiff, establishment types battling crime and vice in the city of Brotherly Love, a herculean task in a city which then easily supported 300 brothels. Suppressing vice lasted a year and then he became Secretary of the Independent Finance Committee, yet another classic good-government group trying to bring reform to a city already infamous as 'corrupt and contented.' Until World War I he worked for a variety of reform groups, helping to elect the progressive Rudolf Blankenburg as mayor and serving as one of the managers of Woodrow Wilson's Presidential campaign in Philadelphia. Woodrow Wilson was one of the few people whom S. Davis held in awe—he even named his eldest son, Woodrow, in his honor.<sup>2</sup>

During World War I Wilson served as an agent for the Department of Justice, without making much of a mark. In 1919 he left Philadelphia to go into the automobile body business in New Jersey.<sup>3</sup> The automobile business failed as did a variety of other business ventures. 1926 found him back in Philadelphia a failure, 45 years of age, a man who had made little impression on his contemporaries. Up to this point Wilson's career demonstrated little more than a relentless ambition to make a name for himself. He kept no job for more than a couple of years and earned a reputation for restlessness and being something of a loner. He had no

friends to speak of, no close associates. He was a man on the make who yearned for fame and recognition that had been denied him so far. This lack of recognition troubled him. All that would soon change. For the last 13 years of his life he would rarely be out of the headlines, and he would dominate the Philadelphia political scene as no one has since the death of the late, lamented Boies Penrose.

Things didn't start well. His first job on returning to Philadelphia was an uninspiring, even demeaning, one—he was hired at \$5 a day as an agent for the Lord's Day Alliance to ferret out illegal drinking at the Sesquicentennial celebration. In this august position he came to the attention of the city Controller, Will B. Hadley who hired him as a special assistant in 1927.<sup>4</sup> Hadley was honest, fairly independent, but an incredibly dull man, who disliked the hurly-burly of politics. He was happiest keeping the city accounts. His only unusual characteristic was his first name. His mother wanted to name him after his father, also a Will Hadley, but didn't like junior. Thus he became Will B.

Wilson started as Hadley's aid and soon moved up to Deputy Controller. He handled the public side of the job, allowing the quieter Hadley to go about his work. In a very short time Wilson became a household name in Philadelphia through a series of well publicized, and well orchestrated clashes with Philadelphia Rapid Transit, the forerunner of SEPTA. At the time the PRT was in the hands of Thomas Mitten, a local businessman of vast ambition and limited abilities. Mitten not only controlled the PRT, but also owned a very successful bank and ran the first air service between Philadelphia and Washington. He had friends in City Hall and did not look kindly on a challenge from the relatively unknown, and not too scrupulous, Wilson. Wilson's battles with Mitten over PRT made his reputation in the city. Some idea of his flair for the dramatic was his charge that the PRT was still carrying among its assets 4200 horses, which he said had been made into glue in 1874.<sup>5</sup>

Wilson's wars with the PRT crested in the fall of 1929 when Mitten died under mysterious circumstances—he drowned while boating. To the press, Wilson hinted at foul play, or at least, suicide. The PRT was forced into receivership through Wilson's efforts. It was a great triumph for him, if for no other reason than that he personally conducted the city's case in court against a battery of high-priced lawyers. David slew Goliath and David enjoyed every headline-filled moment of it. The reporters loved him. If news was slow and they needed a story, Wilson could be counted on for a colorful quote or a juicy lead. Wilson had an unerring eye for publicity and realized that the press, in particular the

reporters, loved controversy of any kind. By the early 1930s he was playing up to his new audience.

His wars with Mitten's administration of the PRT and a later demand that all fares be reduced to 5¢ made him a hero to John Q. Straphanger, an important constituency at a time when few people owned cars and were dependent on public transportation. But his battles were not limited to the transportation system. He charged United Gas Improvement (UGI) was gouging the public and demanded lower rates. He also engaged in a series of well-publicized verbal skirmishes with City Council. A typical Wilson appearance before City Council would go something like this:

Councilman Charley Hall: Did you say that I told you 18 years ago I was an \$1800 sergeant-at-arms and now was worth two million?

Wilson: Yes, I said something like that.

Hall: (Very red in the neck) Why should I tell a dirty rat like you my personal affairs?

Wilson: You're a dirty rat yourself.

Hall: You're a bare-faced liar.

Wilson: You're a liar.<sup>6</sup>

Wilson's flair for public relations sometimes obscured his real talents. Most observers found him to be very effective in the City Controllers office. He was always imaginative in managing the city's funds and in the difficult years of the early depression, under mayors unsympathetic to him, he did wonders in helping to balance the city's books.

Wilson's growing popularity was making him a force in Philadelphia politics. In 1930 he managed the Philadelphia campaign of the successful progressive Republican candidate for governor, Gifford Pinchot. In 1932, despite his formal Republican allegiance, he worked for Franklin Roosevelt's election. The next year he and Hadley were nominated for Controller and City Treasurer respectively by a group of reformers. Calling themselves the Town Meeting party, and endorsed by the revived Democrats, they easily beat what was left of the Vare machine.<sup>7</sup>

As Controller in his own right Wilson felt free to carry on his wars with public targets. But he had his eye on bigger things. There was talk that he wanted to run for Governor on the Democratic ticket in 1934 but he couldn't pull that miracle off. The Democrats, with good reason, didn't fully trust their new convert. This was a wise move on their part,

as Wilson had reopened his lines of communication with the Republican leadership, just in case the Democrats dropped him. Wilson eventually pulled out of the governor's contest and endorsed George Earle for that post on the Democratic ticket. With good grace he spoke for the Democratic ticket in 1934 in 40 counties throughout the state.<sup>8</sup> This also had the effect of making Wilson known out in the 'sticks.'

In 1935 his ambition asserted itself once again. He decided to run for mayor. At first Wilson thought seriously about trying to get the Democratic nomination, but he soon found that the party leaders had promised the nomination to John B. 'Handsome Jack' Kelly. That didn't bother Wilson. He told his assistant, Joseph Sharfsin: "if the Democrats won't have me, I'll get the Republican nomination for mayor."<sup>9</sup>

This was not as far-fetched as it sounds. Republican politics in Philadelphia for forty years had been dominated by the rivalry of two powerful, but antagonistic factions—the Penrose machine and the Vare Brothers' loyal ward leaders in South Philadelphia. After Penrose's death in 1921 power passed to the Vares, who fought off various challenges until the last Vare, William died in 1934. Wilson believed that the Republican ward chiefs might be willing to swallow him in 1935 because of his demonstrated popularity and electability.

The ex-Republican, Pinchoite, Fusionist, turned Democrat, approached what remained of the Vare machine, now led by the contractor, Jerome 'Jerry' Louchheim, and made a deal for the Republican nomination. In return for Louchheim's backing (and some of Joe Pew's money) Wilson agreed to turn over all patronage to them. This led to a bruising primary battle with his old boss, Hadley, who was supported by what was left of Penrose's wing of the party. Louchheim managed to sneak Wilson through in a tight race.<sup>10</sup>

Wilson was surprised by the powerful challenge the Democrats mounted to capture City Hall for the first time in nearly 50 years. Kelly proved a formidable candidate. Personable, articulate, possessor of an attractive family, he was one of the best known Philadelphians of his generation. He came to politics late, after first winning fame as an Olympic sculler and then making a fortune in brick work. Although he disliked politics, he was a natural politician with a flair for campaigning.<sup>11</sup> But he had two serious handicaps. First, the Democratic machine was young and inexperienced; in fact, there was no local Democratic party to speak of until the early 1930s. The Democratic candidate for mayor in 1931 received exactly 10% of the vote. The Democratic party in reality was little more than an extension of the Republicans. The

chairman of the Democratic party in Philadelphia in the early 1930s, John O'Donnell, was on Vare's payroll. Vare even paid the rent for the offices of the Democratic City Committee.<sup>12</sup> Kelly's second handicap was religion. He was a Catholic in a city which still had a tradition of anti-Catholicism, especially among the so-called Protestant Church voters. Of the great urban areas in America, Philadelphia was the last to elect a Catholic mayor—by 1930 Boston and New York had had Catholic mayors for almost 45 years. The Protestant Church groups in Philadelphia distrusted Catholics as wets and suspected that the Pope kept his bags packed for a move to America.

Kelly had something going for him that few Democrats had in Philadelphia—the support of a powerful newspaper. *The Philadelphia Record*, under the aggressive leadership of J. David Stern, had thrown its support to the Democrats in the late 1920s. Stern was one of the power brokers in the city, state and even national Democratic party. In his memoirs he claimed that he was responsible for picking Kelly to run for mayor. Among his other reasons for backing Kelly, he said, was a desire to once and for all “lay the ghost” that a member of a religious minority couldn't be elected mayor of Philadelphia.<sup>13</sup>

*The Record* helped offset the Republican domination of the newspapers in the city. It was better written, better edited and better laid out than the other major papers, particularly the *Bulletin* and the *Inquirer*. Only the *Evening Public Ledger* approached it in the quality of its political reporting. Stern gave orders to blacken Wilson and to play up Kelly. His people did a superb job. Jerry Doyle, then a young cartoonist just establishing his reputation, did a hatchet job on Wilson—S. ‘Devious’ as Doyle always called him. It wasn't hard to caricature Wilson. He was a cartoonist's dream, short, with a bulbous nose, a perpetual cigar stuck in his face, always in spats. He looked like a cross between a corrupt baby and a less cynical W. C. Fields.

In his campaign for mayor Wilson pulled out all stops.<sup>14</sup> To placate Louchheim and the New Deal-hating Pew, Wilson, who had supported FDR and Earle, now discovered that the nation was endangered if the New Deal was not repudiated in Philadelphia. The result of continuing the New Deal, he predicted, would be such catastrophes as 50¢ a pound for meat and jail sentences for planting potatoes.<sup>15</sup> Philadelphia he said should support “the sound and tried Republican policies that had made Pennsylvania the industrial capital of the nation.” This showed nerve if nothing else considering that Philadelphia and the state of Pennsylvania were among the areas of the nation hardest hit by the depression. Philadelphia's unemployment rate had hit 30% and the city was

bankrupt early in the 1930s. Some testament to tried and true Republican policies!

Since the Democrats were supported by Albert Greenfield, the real estate and banking tycoon, Wilson threw a little anti-semitism into the campaign. He accused Kelly and his fellow Democrats of being tools of Jewish interests, owing large sums of money to Greenfield. Since Greenfield was unpopular with the more conservative financial elements in the city, this veiled anti-semitic ploy didn't hurt Wilson in the least. Greenfield never forgave Wilson. His private papers are filled with unflattering references to Wilson as a political whore, selling himself to the highest bidder.<sup>16</sup> After his election, Greenfield had to live with Wilson, but never never trusted him.

Wilson won the election by a margin of 45,000 votes, out of 713,000 cast. Kelly made the best showing of any Democratic candidate for mayor in nearly 50 years.<sup>17</sup> In fact there were rumors all over the city that the Republicans had actually stolen the election. One theory was that Mort Witkin, boss of the 13th ward along the Delaware River, had devised the election-night strategy that cost Kelly 30,000 votes.<sup>18</sup> Kelly believed to his dying day that Witkin was responsible for dumping many of his votes in the river.<sup>19</sup>

Wilson was now at the peak of his career. He was mayor of the third largest city in America and he had come out of nowhere to become a power in the city in less than 10 years. He celebrated with an unusual inauguration in January 1936. In the past the swearing in ceremony for the mayor had taken place in City Hall before a handful of people. Always dramatic, Wilson wanted something special. In a howling snowstorm, 10,000 people jammed Convention Hall to watch the people's mayor, as Wilson liked to refer to himself, be sworn in by a justice of the State Supreme Court.<sup>20</sup> Apparently Chief Justice of the Supreme Court, Charles Evans Hughes, was busy that day. Wilson's Republican predecessor, Hampton Moore, stayed away, regarding the whole affair as tasteless.

Wilson began his tenure as mayor with another blast at the New Deal to placate his uneasy Republican allies. He told the cheering crowd that his election saved the city of Philadelphia from "the shadow of the menace of an alien and a foreign philosophy of government that hung over the city."<sup>21</sup> In a matter of weeks he was sparring with the Republican leadership in the city. Early in 1936 he dropped in on Stern and asked for a drink. He told Stern that he was unhappy with his Republican allies. "I just can't stand those reactionary sons-of-bitches. I don't belong in their camp."<sup>22</sup> He didn't stay very long.

1936 was Wilson's miracle year. Hardly a week passed that didn't witness some dramatic gesture on his part. He renewed his warfare with UGI and PRT. He claimed that the PRT could be run efficiently with two men on the trolleys and a 5¢ fare. He charged that the company's stock was watered and that the owners were robbing the people of Philadelphia. He had a well-publicized clash with a young lawyer for PRT Richardson Dilworth who was just beginning to make a name for himself in Philadelphia. After a hearing on the transit system Dilworth accused Wilson of trying to force the PRT into bankruptcy. "You're right I am," Wilson retorted. "I'm going to wipe out the whole system and I'll take no more from you. I'll give you a punch in the nose."<sup>23</sup>

Wilson's battles with UGI were equally dramatic. UGI's lease was up for renewal in 1936. He wanted them to sell the city gas at 50¢ per 1000 cubic foot, less than half the national average. Naturally, the company directors refused. Wilson declared war on them. Among the more sensational, and as usual, unsubstantiated charges he leveled at them was pumping air into the gas supply. He threatened to declare a state of emergency in the city and take over the gas company. Only an injunction brought by UGI stopped him. When negotiations resumed, a new contract granted the city gas at 90¢ per cubic foot, still far below the national average.<sup>24</sup> It was a typical Wilson performance—showy, dramatic brinkmanship, but with a good result for the city.

Other triumphs followed in 1936. By offering \$200,000 in up-front-money this anti-New Deal Republican convinced the Democrats to bring their Presidential convention to Philadelphia. Wilson also guaranteed that there would be no gouging of the delegates. He showed his organizational talents by getting the city businessmen to agree to keep restaurant, hotel and parking prices in line. He went further and even got the city to offer prizes worth \$1500 to delegates writing the best essays on Philadelphia.<sup>25</sup> The thought of the delegates to a Democratic convention sitting in their hotel rooms composing learned essays about the historic sights of Philadelphia boggles the mind. There are no records of who won or even if anybody entered the contest. After the convention Wilson boasted that the city took in over \$1,500,000 from the delegates.<sup>26</sup> Not bad for the middle of the depression.

He never stopped pulling rabbits out of his hat during the year. New ideas and grandiose plans popped forth from his fertile imagination almost daily. He announced that he would not accept his full salary of \$18,000 but would give \$3,000 to the city because of the depression. He negotiated a contract whereby the Army-Navy football game was moved to Philadelphia. In a pure public relations ploy he offered the job of



Superintendent of Police to J. Edgar Hoover, who was busy chasing public enemies and headlines. He announced that the world-renowned Philadelphia Orchestra would give a series of pop concerts. He banned a victory parade celebrating the Italian conquest of Ethiopia on the grounds it would be a tasteless affront to the negro population of the city. He suggested that the Mummers parade be moved from New Year's Day to sometime in May so that more people could enjoy it. He went to Washington and talked Harry Hopkins into more WPA jobs for the city. With his usual modesty he claimed that he got 40,000 jobs where former Mayor Moore had gotten only 200. He had his name stenciled on all kinds of city property, including traffic lights, building projects, and even trashcans earning him the nickname 'Ashcan' Wilson. Finally, in a move that foreshadowed his successor, Frank Rizzo, he ordered the purchase of guard dogs to accompany police on their rounds in dangerous parts of the city.<sup>27</sup>

In October, Wilson announced that he would register as a non-partisan. This was the first step in his break with the Republican party. He told friends that he was growing bored with the job of mayor, especially now that the Republicans could thwart his ideas through their overwhelming control of City Council. In fact Wilson was after bigger things. He believed that the Democrats might be willing to support him for Governor in 1938.

All through 1937 Wilson schemed to advance his political career in the same way he had first made a reputation, by attacking a wide range of targets. He declared open war against Governor Earle, accusing his administration of short-changing Philadelphia and of being totally corrupt. He announced that he had personally discovered a nefarious plot by Earle to tap his telephone.<sup>28</sup> At the same time he engaged in a public feud with FDR. Roosevelt had refused to come to Philadelphia to speak at a meeting celebrating the 150th anniversary of the Constitutional Convention. Wilson attributed this to his refusal to lend the Liberty Bell for the coming World's Fair in New York. "As long as I'm mayor," he bellowed, "the Liberty Bell stays in Philadelphia."<sup>29</sup>

Lest it be thought his fights were only with Democrats, he also declared open war on the Republicans in 1937. He announced that he would support the Democrats in the row office election that year. When Jay Cooke, one of key figures in the city GOP, read him out of the Republican party for this, Wilson turned his talent for verbal abuse on him. Who was Cooke, he sneered, but an "unmitigated liar" and a "satchel carrier" for Joe Pew. Pew countered by saying that Wilson had broken all his campaign pledges and had allowed the "fair name" of

Philadelphia to be dragged in the mud by not cracking down on vice and corruption in the city. Wilson exploded: Pew's real concern he said was that when I'm governor I'll require him to keep only one set of books and to pay his honest share of taxes.<sup>30</sup>

Wilson's problems were starting to mount. He had changed parties so often that the public was now confused. Sheer opportunism and his reckless charges were beginning to catch up with him. He had blundered by breaking with the Republicans before he had assured his position with the Democrats. His desire for the governorship did not sit well with many Democrats. He had proven so unreliable and so difficult in his personal and political relationships in the past that no major Democrat was eager to work with him. Finally, his political instincts were beginning to fail him as his own health deteriorated. He had always smoked and drunk too much, but now rumors circulated that he was showing up for work drunk. He was only sleeping a few hours a night, and getting no physical exercise. He had no hobbies but politics and his own advancement. As a result he broke down from overwork in January 1938. The public was told that he was suffering from exhaustion. In reality this was the first of a series of strokes that would eventually kill him.<sup>31</sup>

He recovered in time to wade into the middle of an enormously complex Democratic power struggle in Pennsylvania in 1938. John L. Lewis, head of the Coal Miners Union and President of the CIO, was trying to wrest control of the Democratic party in the state. He wanted to run one of his henchmen, Lt. Governor Thomas Kennedy for Governor. The regular Democrats had their own slate: Earle for the Senate and Charles Alvin Jones of Pittsburgh for Governor. It promised to be a typical Democratic bloodbath. Lewis needed a presentable candidate to run against Earle. Wilson was acceptable because he had a good labor record as mayor—he adamantly refused to allow the police to be used as strikebreakers. The chance to run for the Senate proved to be too much of a lure for Wilson to pass up. He wanted the governorship, but he was willing to settle for the Senate.<sup>32</sup> He plunged into the primary campaign with typical enthusiasm. He began on a sensational note by accusing Earle of being totally corrupt, saying that Matt McCloskey, the recipient of over \$9 million in state building contracts had given Earle a bribe of \$26,500.<sup>33</sup> Wilson also charged that Earle was going to use the state police to insure that he won the primary. To counter this, he demanded Federal supervision of the election. He traveled all over the state hurling his usual assortment of charges and brickbats. It was all in vain. The regulars won handily. Wilson suffered the most ignomin-

ious defeat of his political career. Not only did he lose the Senatorial nomination by nearly 500,000 votes statewide, but he also failed to carry a single ward in Philadelphia.<sup>34</sup> Wilson had one last card up his sleeve—he denounced the election as fraudulent and asked the Senate Civil Liberties Committee to come to Pennsylvania and investigate it.<sup>35</sup> They passed up the opportunity.

Wilson's career was now finished. Just before the election of 1938 a Republican District Attorney had the Philadelphia Grand Jury unearth widespread evidence of gambling and police corruption. They voted indictments of Wilson and four top officials of the police department. Wilson was charged on 19 counts of willfully failing to suppress gambling. He signed his own bond for \$10,000 bail, and predicted that nothing would come of the charges.<sup>36</sup> He was right. A friendly judge squashed the charges, but the odor of corruption hung over him as he, a lameduck mayor, entered his last year in office.

Neither party wanted anything to do with him and a political career that had awed and amazed the city for 13 years was now in limbo. Trying to put up a good front, Wilson talked of new projects, of going into business, of traveling, but it was obvious that at only 58 he had lost his zest for life. He was terribly sick with high blood pressure and heart trouble throughout 1939. Early in August he suffered a massive stroke and died. He had resigned as mayor only a few days earlier, but he had long since been written off by the city political leaders.

His death brought out a surprising degree of affection for him. The press was kind, probably because he had provided them with so many good stories. His funeral was one of the largest in Philadelphia history. Five thousand people filed past his coffin, which lay in state at Oliver Bair's on Chestnut Street. The Reverend Ross B. Stover of the Messiah Lutheran Church preached the eulogy and aptly captured Wilson's qualities. He was, said Stover, "a man who always thought in black and white and never thought in gray. He knew the average man. He had the unique talent of feeling the pulse of the masses, whose confidence he never lost." The huge attendance at his funeral indicates that Stover was right. The people had remained fond of Wilson, even when they no longer trusted his political judgment.<sup>37</sup>

He had one more shock in store for the public. In November his will was probated and it was revealed that he died without assets of any kind. His total estate was \$50. His home was so heavily mortgaged that the bank foreclosed shortly after his death. City Council was asked to draw up some kind of special pension for his widow, but they pigeon-holed the issue until just before Christmas when Barney Samuels, President of

City Council, played Santa Claus and announced they had voted her a lump sum of \$10,900.<sup>38</sup>

Wilson was quickly forgotten by the city he had dominated so completely. World War II, and the Clark-Dilworth reform movement of the post war period made Wilson seem terribly dated, a holdover from the Vare-Penrose days. He was a political buccaneer who used everyone and every party that he was ever associated with for his own advantage. He left little tangible in his aftermath, and yet while he was mayor, a keen observer of the Philadelphia political scene, the editor of *Fortune* magazine, argued that his administration was the best in Philadelphia's history.<sup>39</sup> Most importantly, he made the political life of the city interesting and colorful. In a city used to Barney Samuels, Jim Tate and Bill Green, that is not to be sneered at.

#### NOTES

1. There is no biography of Wilson but material on his life can be found in T. Henry Walnut, "S. Davis Wilson," in J. T. Salter, *The American Politician* Chapel Hill, 1938.
2. *Philadelphia Record*, August 20, 1939, special obituary of Wilson.
3. Robert E. Drayer, "J. Hampton Moore: An Old Fashioned Republican," (Ph.D., University of Pennsylvania, 1961), p. 364.
4. *Philadelphia Record*, August 20, 1939.
5. "Turmoil in Traction," *Time*, XXVII, February 17, 1936, p. 60.
6. Walnut, "Wilson," p. 293.
7. For a good analysis of this election see J. T. Salter, "The End of Vare," *Political Science Quarterly*, June 1935, pp. 214-235.
8. Irwin Greenberg, "The Philadelphia Democratic Party, 1911-1934," Ph.D. Thesis, Temple University, 1972, p. 566.
9. Joseph Sharfsin Interview, Temple University Urban Archive, November 29, 1977, p. 6.
10. Wilson defeated Hadley by some 23,000 votes, 168,000 to 145,000.
11. There are a number of biographies of the talented Kelly family, the most recent being, Arthur Lewis, *Those Philadelphia Kellys, With a Touch of Grace*, New York, 1977. None of the biographies are very scholarly, and most are anecdotal with their real interest centering on Princess Grace of Monaco. John B. Kelly's political career tends to be treated lightly.
12. The best survey of the Democratic party in Philadelphia is Greenberg's. It can be supplemented by John L. Shover, "The Emergence of a Two Party System in Republican Philadelphia, 1924-36," *Journal of American History*, LX, nu. 4, March 1974. The Vare machine in extremes is analyzed by J. T. Salter, *Boss Rule: Portraits in City Politics*. New York, 1935.
13. J. David Stern, *The Reminiscences of J. David Stern*, Columbia Oral History Project, 1953-1954, p. 53. Stern also published an interesting autobiography, *The Memoirs of a Maverick Publisher*, New York, 1962.
14. The most recent examination of this election can be found in John P. Rossi, "The

Kelly-Wilson Mayoralty Election of 1935," *Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography*, CVII, Nu. 2, April 1983.

15. Walnut, "Wilson," p. 296, in Salter, *The American Politician*.
16. "In Philadelphia," *Time*, XXVI, November 18, 1935, p. 14-15. Greenfield bitterly resented these slurs. His papers contain some unflattering comments about Wilson's ambition and his attempts to secure Greenfield's financial backing. In one memorandum Greenfield accused Wilson of selling himself to the Republican organization whom he had attacked so bitterly in the past. In another he labeled Wilson a political whore. Albert M. Greenfield Papers, Historical Society of Pennsylvania, Box 27, memoranda undated but with papers dated October 1935.
17. The final vote was Wilson 379,299 to 333,811 for Kelly, a plurality of just over 45,000 for Wilson. *Bulletin Almanac and Yearbook for 1936*, Philadelphia, 1937, p. 440.
18. James Reichley, *The Art of Government: Reform and Organizational Politics in Philadelphia*. New York, 1959, p. 10.
19. John B. Kelly Jr. Interview, Temple University Urban Archive, August 5, 1977, p. 2.
20. "Philadelphia," *Fortune*, XIII, June 1936, p. 194.
21. *New York Times*, January 7, 1936, p. 2.
22. J. David Stern, *Memoirs of a Maverick Publisher*, p. 230.
23. "Turmoil in Traction," *Time*, XXVII, February 17, 1936, p. 59-60.
24. "Fun in Philadelphia," *Time*, XXXI, January 10, 1938, p. 52-54.
25. "Philadelphia Gets the Democratic Convention For \$200,000," *Newsweek*, VII, January 18, 1936.
26. *New York Times*, June 29, 1936, p. 8.
27. *Philadelphia Record*, August 20, 1939, special obituary notice on Wilson.
28. *New York Times*, July 25, 1937, p. 1.
29. *Ibid.*, April 7, 1936, p. 27.
30. *Ibid.*, September 5, 1937, p. 5.
31. *Philadelphia Record*, August 20, 1939.
32. *New York Times*, May 26, 1938, p. 34.
33. "Earle, Jones defeat Wilson, Kennedy," *Newsweek*, XI, May 30, 1938, p. 7-9.
34. Wilson lost Philadelphia by over 100,000 votes.
35. *New York Times*, August 20, 1939, p. 33.
36. "Woes of a Reformer," *Newsweek*, XII, September 19, 1938, p. 11-12.
37. *New York Times*, August 20, 1939, p. 33.
38. *Philadelphia Record*, December 21, 1939.
39. "Philadelphia," *Fortune*, June 1936, p. 205. The *New York Times* commented on Wilson's death that "politics in Philadelphia may now be peaceful but they will be less picturesque." August 21, 1939, p. 12.